

War Labor Board Urges Street Railways In Big Cities Be Granted Rate Raise

NO INCREASE IN CAR FARES LIKELY NOW IN CAPITAL

By BILL PRICE.

No increase in street car fares in Washington is likely for a long time, if at all, no matter what the outcome of efforts to have Presidential or Congressional action that will put the street railways of the country under Federal control that they may obtain increases of fares to 6 cents to meet increased wages to employees and extra costs all along the line.

President Wilson has before him recommendations from the War Labor Board, headed by William H. Taft, former President, and Frank P. Walsh, that electric car lines in nearly all big cities of the country are in financial difficulties because of demands upon them for higher wages and the general rise in the price of everything used in the street railway business, and that something should be done to insure against a widespread breakdown in these utilities, regarded by the Administration as essential to the carrying on of the war.

Worked for Weeks.

This war labor board worked for weeks in trying to settle street railway strikes and learned a great deal about street railway conditions, not much of it hopeful for the railway companies.

AMUSEMENTS

FILM FEATURES

GARDEN TODAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY—GLADYS HULETTE IN "FOR SALE."

PLAZA TODAY ONLY—CARMEL MYERS IN "ROADWAY SCANDAL." TOMORROW—BESSIE BARRACLOUGH IN "ROSE OF PARADISE."

LEADER 807 8th St. N. W. TODAY AND ALL THE WEEK—"GROVER WALKER IN 'THE KID IS CLEVER.' EXTRA SUNSHINE COMEDY."

STRAND TODAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY—VIOLE DANA IN "BLUE JEANS."

B.F. KEITH'S 15c. Daily 1:15 Sun 1:15 Holys 1:15 1:15

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M.L.E. DAZIE & CO. Melinger & Meyer, Annie Chandler, Krasner & Morton. Other Hits.

LOEW'S COLUMBIA 15c. TODAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY—"CHARLES RAY IN 'The Claws of the Hun' EXTRA—'FATTY ARBUCKLE'."

Mats. 15c. STRAND 15c. TODAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY—"BLUE JEANS."

STARS TODAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY—"VIOLE DANA."

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Mike and Ike—They Look Alike

Copyright, 1918, by R. L. Goldberg.

By Goldberg



Goldberg is at his Best in His Cartoon for Next Sunday's Times

companies. The war board of the American Electric Railway Association, with headquarters in this city, appeared before Messrs. Taft and Walsh and presented arguments that President Wilson already has power, under various war acts passed by Congress, to fix rates of fare on electric railways.

The arguments, carefully prepared by attorneys, went into the different war laws and contended that under any one of several the President can and should take charge of the situation owing to discouraging developments.

The war labor board reached the conclusion that the President should

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be made aware of the facts for such action as he deems best and made a full report to him pointing out that the raising of wages in some cities would bring discontent in others; that wages cannot be raised without increased car fares that will enlarge the income of the car companies.

Suggest Administrator.

One suggestion is that the President should assume general charge of electric lines to the extent of appointing a Street Railway Administrator with power to make increases of fares wherever it was necessary.

The President and Secretary McAdoo, director of the nation's steam railroads, have long had pleasure before them to jump into the electric railway business but both have hesitated.

In hundreds of cities and towns electric roads have been milked dry by stockholders, who pulled down big dividends regardless of proper maintenance, and of the rights of the people. Now they see financial

losses ahead, with the roads going to junk, and they yell for Federal interference so that the concerns may be put in apple pie order by taxing the public for improvements, and higher wages that should have been forthcoming out of big dividends that were being paid.

No General Rate Raise.

Even if there should be some limited control of the electric lines by the Federal Government, it is improbable that there would be any general raises of car fares to 6 cents, as has been suggested. Conditions in each particular locality would have to be considered.

The President and Mr. McAdoo appealed months ago to public service corporations of States and cities to do the square thing by public utilities. All these official bodies have been steadily busy listening to appeals for increased rates for car fares, gas, and electricity, and many of the appeals have been granted. They have been slow in giving the relief asked for. Another appeal to them to hasten consideration of appeals with a view to relief where it is actually needed may be made by the Administration.

There are many excellent reasons why the Federal Government should

completely take over the traction lines of Washington. Upon them depend to a large degree the success of the Government's executive activities in the carrying of the thousands of employees who man the executive guns, and do the clerical work that runs the wheels of the Government. They must be contented to remain here. Comfortable transportation to and from their work is part of the day's program that determines whether they are satisfied.

But as to the strictly financial needs of the local roads the Federal Government, unless it does bodily take over the Washington companies, would leave that to the Public Utilities Commission of this city.

That commission sees no immediate need for an increase of street car fares here. The Capital Traction Company has just put its stock on a permanent 6 per cent basis, as permanent as war conditions will permit. Its stockholders evidently believe they will be able to continue this dividend. The attitude of the commission is that 6 per cent is a big dividend for public utilities in war times. The extraordinary time in which we are living makes extraordinary action necessary.

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Some of the members of the board expressed an opinion that the school children of Washington needed a president of the school board nearer than France and John B. Lerner pointed out that no matter how much they all honored the absent president the board had a duty to perform to the children of Washington. Mr. Lerner, Fountain Peyton, and Dr. H. B. Learned voted in favor of electing an "active" head for the board. Mrs. Gerry spoke of Dr. Van Schaick's extended plans for the schools and said "there is more than a possibility of his returning in the autumn. The extraordinary time in which we are living makes extraordinary action necessary."

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The Washington Railway and Electric Company, which has never recovered from the strike of more than a year ago, is buying fifty new cars which are to be paid for out of a bond issue authorized by the Utilities Commission. It has not been able to take advantage of the increased population. Its cars are handled so badly that there is incessant complaint from the public.

Yet what the company is losing in its street railway operations it is gaining from the big returns it obtains from the Potomac Electric Power Company, which it owns and which is the goose that is laying the golden eggs. The Washington public, of course, feeds the goose. So long as the goose continues to produce the eggs the Washington Railway and Electric Company will not be so awfully hard up financially that it will have to ask for increased fares before the Capital Traction does so.

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